

The Christian.

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MARCH, 1888

EDITORIAL.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.—1 Tim. iv. 8.

When a prudent man is about to enter into a worldly enterprize he cautiously asks, Will it pay? It involves time and labor and capital, which will be all lost if the enterprize proves a failure.

In the case before us a failure can never be remedied; the loss must be irreparable, because we have neither time, ability nor resource left for another enterprise.

Paul declares that godliness is profitable for all things, both present and future, and hence it pays well. Bodily exercise profiteth little—that is, the doctrines of men—forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats which God created to be received with thanksgiving. These punishments of the body they vainly hoped would make amends for their sins and please God. He compares such teaching to the stories told by old women to amuse children.

Godliness is resembling God. No man hath seen God at any time. Moses earnestly prayed for a sight of His glory, but no man could see Him and live. No man could make an image of God because no man hath seen nor can see Him. Heathens worshipped images of men and beasts, changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, etc.

No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared or revealed Him. It was God's purpose that man should bear His image, and the man Christ Jesus is the image of the invisible God. He is "the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power." (Heb. i. 3). Those who saw Jesus saw the Father. The Jews had neither heard the voice of God nor seen His shape, and they rejected Jesus who was His express image, and thereby shut themselves out from the knowledge of God. He that rejects Jesus rejects the Father who sent Him. To be saved by Christ and united to Him is to be godly, and to walk in His footsteps is to exercise godliness or be like God. I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. (Jer. ix. 24).

Godliness is an exercise—an active display of God's character among men. It always shone in the face of Jesus Christ. He went about doing good in the midst of an ungodly world. He was the Light of the world, and intended that His people should be active in doing good among men and thus shine as lights in the world. We are apt to forget this when trouble comes, and like David sigh for the wings of a dove that we might fly away and be at rest. (Ps. lv. 6).

Many think that godliness consists in withdrawing from the abodes of men into cloisters where no ungodly shall disturb our rest and communion with God. Jesus neither did this nor enjoined it on His people. They are not to put their light under a bushel but on a candlestick, that all may see. We should boldly meet trouble rather than fly from it, and follow Jesus through floods and flames, if need be, rather than idly and impatiently wish for rest. When our Father's time comes we will need no wings, no cloisters, but He will receive us to that rest which remains for His people. Till then we should live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world. We have a very short time for work and a very long time for rest, godliness is profitable for both. Godliness in us is profitable or all the members of the church. It encourages the weak members. For all such Jesus has special

regard, and predicts the awful doom of him who offends a little one who believes in Him. One great end of the church is to bear with, watch over and save weak members. But how apt are we to grow impatient with such and even regard their fall with comparative indifference, although Jesus informs us that "their angels do always behold the face of His Father in heaven. (Mat. xviii. 6-10).

It was godliness that determined Paul to eat no meat while the world standeth if he would thereby save a weak brother. He sought not his own profit but the profit of many that they might be saved. (1. Cor. x. 33). If we, in love for others, practice self-denial for their good, it will prove profitable in their salvation.

It is profitable for the conversion of the unsaved. If we manifest no particular desire to have the gospel preached to those who are without, and make no particular effort to support the gospel, we will notice this sooner than the unconverted themselves, and what impression will they have of our religion and of our love for their souls? Again, although we may be zealous in having the gospel preached, both at home and abroad, and our lives contradict gospel teaching. If we do not deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and live righteously, soberly and godly, who will notice and be effected by it sooner than those who are without. Godliness is profitable for the salvation of the lost.

Paul kept under his body and exercised godliness, lest he should be himself a castaway. With all his zeal and suffering for Christ, he felt his daily need of making his own calling and election sure. All Christians need the same. Godliness is profitable for this. If ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so, on entrance, shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (II. Pet. i. 10, 11). God's promises are great and precious to His people. In this life He has promised to guard them with His angels, to be ever ready to hear their prayers—to have His eyes over them and never leave nor forsake them. Jesus took special pains to impress His disciples with His Father's knowledge of them, and His constant care in providing for their temporal wants, so that they might be relieved from anxious care on that point, and give their best energies to the advancement of His kingdom. He did not require them to neglect the things of time, but to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness with the assurance that they would see that kingdom prosper, and in addition, have worldly prosperity or as much of it as would be for their good and His glory.

Original Contributions.

PAUL'S DETERMINATION.

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—1 Cor. ii. 1, 2.

The circumstances and motives which may have led to this determination on the part of the Apostle Paul, together with some wholesome lessons to be learned from the style and conduct of so successful a preacher as the great Apostle of the Gentiles, are the leading thoughts in the following remarks.

"When I came to you." This adverbial clause of time leads us back to Paul's second missionary journey, when accompanied by Sylvanus, he passed by way of Syria and Selicia into the rugged tableland of Asia Minor. Taking Timotheus with them, from Derbe they passed through Phrygia and Galatia, strengthening the faith of those simple yet honest hearted semi-barbarians. At Mysia their course is changed by Divine interposition, and not being permitted to enter Bythinia they turned aside to Troas. On this classic shore, every foot of which is associated with deeds of heroes and of gods, as recounted in Grecian legend and in song, the

Apostle saw in the night vision the man of Macedonia, the representative of sin-oppressed Europe. He heard the cry, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." The interpretation was certain. The Lord had called them to preach the gospel to the dwellers in those western lands; to nations, as the Apostle well knew, that were steeped in the very dregs of licentiousness and corruption; yet unequalled in military greatness, in wealth and magnificence, in literature and art. Nations that boasted a heroic ancestry, and the patronage and protection of the immortal gods.

It was what writers style the "Glorious Augustan Age." The matchless victories of Cæsar, and the powerful eloquence of Cicero, were yet green in the memory of the nations. Genius was in its noonday splendor. Nothing was wanting that opulence, beauty and voluptuousness could minister to the sensual nature of man; or that science, art or literature could combine to gratify his taste. But beneath this external polish all was darkness, misery and corruption. No faith; no purity; and even patriotism had fled!

As in the searching light of God's infinite purity unrighteousness is revealed in its darkest and most repulsive aspects, so to the eye of the inspired Apostle the dark lines of vice, cruelties and nameless abominations would mar and deface whatever of beauty, grandeur or genius human systems might possess. Human greatness and human degradation were visible, not merely side by side, but combined and thoroughly amalgamated in the same system. All of greatness, magnificence and pleasure that mankind would attain, "without God and without hope," in the world; and at the same time all the misery and degradation inseparable from society, where God has given a people "over to a reprobate mind." Thus under the highest earthly culture, this poor humanity of ours was but a mass of putrifying sores that nothing but the "Balm of Gilead" and the "Great Physician" could heal. He who would see this dark picture delineated by the pen of inspiration will find it in the latter part of the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Is it any wonder that, fired with holy indignation, the Apostle could feel but loathing and abhorance for everything connected with so foul a system? What interest could he take in Homer's heroes or Iliad's towers; in Ida's fabled divinities or the shadowy legends of the deeds of Grecian heroes? No, the mission of the Cross was to him the all-absorbing theme. To carry the life giving word to his dying fellow men; to tear down the strongholds of Satan and build up the Kingdom of God's dear Son, was the work he was called to do. He was determined to know nothing among these people save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

But Paul could foresee that others would come after him who would not be guided by this principle; but would lead men away from the truth by the enticing words of men's wisdom. He knew that a time would come when men would not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts would heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and would turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables. Hence he reminds his Corinthian brethren of the purity and simplicity of his preaching among them, and offers that telling apology for his lack, it may be, in that style of oratory which they were accustomed to hear. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, declaring unto you the testimony of God, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom."

Will some one say that the Apostle Paul had no taste for classic literature, for natural science or the arts? No so. Hear him in Athens, before the assembled wisdom and philosophy of that city of literary fame, confuting their doctrines by quoting from their own poets (Acts xvii. 28);

As to his knowledge of nature and her laws, a few instances will suffice to show the depth and